A–B Blind-Spot Vocabulary for Advanced Romance-Language Speakers

This document highlights English vocabulary and phrasal verbs that are typically underused, misunderstood, or avoided by advanced English speakers whose mother tongue is a Romance language.

A–B Blind-Spot Vocabulary (40 words)

1. ASKANCE – sideways, with suspicion
2. AWRY – gone wrong
3. ALOFT – up in the air
4. AMISS – wrong, improper
5. ANEW – again, afresh
6. ASTIR – awake and active
7. ABREAST – up to date
8. AGOG – very eager
9. AFOOT – underway
10. BALD – plain, undisguised
11. BALK – hesitate or refuse
12. BANDY – exchange words
13. BARK (verb) – speak harshly
14. BEGRUDGE – resent giving
15. BELIE – contradict appearances
16. BEMUSED – confused (not amused)
17. BENCH (verb) – sideline
18. BEREAVE – deprive by loss
19. BESPEAK – indicate
20. BETRAY – reveal unintentionally
21. BEWILDER – confuse deeply
22. BIDE – wait patiently
23. BITE (noun) – sharp quality
24. BLATANT – offensively obvious
25. BLEAK – harsh, hopeless
26. BLINKERED – narrow-minded
27. BLUNT – too direct
28. BOG DOWN – become stuck
29. BOLT – sudden movement or idea
30. BORDERLINE – almost
31. BRASH – aggressively confident
32. BRITTLE – fragile
33. BROACH – introduce a topic
34. BRUSHOFF – dismissive treatment
35. BUDGE – move slightly or change opinion

36. BULK (verb) – loom large
37. BUNGLE – mess up incompetently
38. BURLY – heavily built
39. BYGONE – belonging to the past

Phrasal-Verb Blind Spots (20)

40. act up – malfunction
41. angle for – seek indirectly
42. back out – withdraw from a commitment
43. bear out – confirm
44. brush aside – dismiss
45. buckle down – work seriously
46. butt in – interrupt
47. call off – cancel
48. cast aside – discard
49. clamp down on – repress strictly
50. close in on – approach threateningly
51. come across as – give an impression
52. crop up – appear unexpectedly
53. fend off – repel
54. give way to – yield
55. hammer out – work out laboriously
56. hold off – delay
57. lash out – react angrily
58. play down – minimize
59. rule out – exclude as a possibility